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ABSTRACT

This paper illustrates the Clinical Model of Parents' Awareness (CMPA) for effectiveness of teaching Chinese Americans based on a previous research finding, the Patterns of Chinese Americans' Learning Chinese Learning Environment (PCACLE). The clinical model includes eight components: (1) prepare a teacher-parent conferences; (2) present 5 patterns of Chinese language learning circumstances; (3) discuss the internal and external consistency within each factor in the pattern; (4) identify a matching pattern by the parents; (5) analyze contextual factors related to the student; (6) negotiate possible solutions and select the best one; (7) plan and implement actions; (8) conduct follow-up observation and evaluation. Implications on parenting are discussed. It is suggested that CMPA and PCACLE can be applied in diverse ethnic groups when they want to help their next generation learn their native language in someplace other than their own countries. Appendixes include references and graphics for PCACLE. (Contains 10 references.) (Author/KFT)

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A Clinical Model of Parents' Awareness for Effectiveness of Teaching Chinese-Americans Chinese Language

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Abstract

This paper illustrates the Clinical Model of Parents' Awareness (CMPA) for effectiveness of teaching Chinese-Americans Chinese based on a previous research finding, the Patterns of Chinese American's Chinese Learning Environment (PCACLE) (Lai, 1999). The clinical model includes eight components: (1) Prepare a teacher-parent conference. (2) Present five patterns of Chinese language learning circumstances. (3) Discuss the internal and external consistency within each factor in the pattern. (4) Identify a matching pattern by the parents. (5) Analyze contextual factors related to the student. (6) Negotiate possible solutions and select the best one. (7) Plan and implement actions. (8) Conduct follow-up observation and evaluation. Implications on parenting are discussed. The author suggests that CMPA and PCACLE can be applied in diverse ethnic groups when they want to help their next generations learn their native language in the place other than their own countries. (Appendixes include references and graphics for PCACLE).

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A Clinical Model of Parents' Awareness for Effectiveness of Teaching Chinese-Americans Chinese Language

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Although human beings are born differently in their biological shapes, their belief and actions interactively influence or are influenced by their physical, social, and psychological environment (Lai, 1995). Related notions can be found in many social psychologists such as Alfred Adler, Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, and Harry Stack Sullivan (Hall & Lindzey, 1978). Take linguistic learning as an example, most American-born Chinese can speak English fluently if they grew in the United States through out their childhood and teenage years. However, not every one of them can speak Chinese fluently because English is the main stream in American society. Schools in the United States use English to teach science and humanity. People use English to communicate with others in their everyday life. Thus, in most cases, the next generations of Chinese Americans have difficulties in learning Chinese because it is not an important element in their process of socialization.

Derived from this notion, teaching Chinese language is not only concerned with Chinese teaching in the classroom, but also related to a climate or a learning environment pattern created by parents. Most Chinese schools open only two hours a week. To assert that American-born Chinese will use Chinese to assimilate and accommodate information (Piaget, 1969; Phillips & Soltix, 1985) after school is not realistic. Children spend almost one half day at home. If parents are appropriately involved, Chinese teaching becomes smooth and effective. Nevertheless, if parents' involvement is not appropriate, it may create additional barriers for children to learn Chinese in the place other than Taiwan, Hong Kong, or Mainland China. But how do parents come to know whether they create an appropriate environment for their children? How do Chinese teachers solve this problem?

The purposes of this clinical model for effectiveness of teaching Chinese language are to (1) improve Chinese teaching by inviting parents' positive involvement and (2) call for further quantitative and qualitative research regarding Chinese leaning and parenting. This clinical approach is important because it provides concrete steps to help Chinese teachers seal the gap between Chinese teaching and parenting if it is appropriately implemented.

Conceptual Framework of CMPA for Effectiveness of Teaching Chinese

The Clinical Model of Parents' Awareness (CMPA) for Chinese teaching incorporates the Patterns of Chinese American's Chinese Learning Environment (PCACLE) (Lai, 1999) and practical reasoning model (Laster, 1987; Lai, 1995) derived from Dewey's scientific method and democratic thinking (Dewey, 1966). The model contains eight steps: (1) Prepare a teacher-parent conference. (2) Present five patterns of Chinese language learning circumstances. (3) Discuss the internal and external

consistency within each factor in the pattern. (4) Identify a matching pattern by the parents. (5) Analyze contextual factors of students related to the pattern. (6) Negotiate possible solutions and select the best one. (7) Plan and implement actions. (8) Conduct follow-up observation and evaluation. The model is useful for Chinese teachers with Chinese students who are younger than 8 years old.

Prepare a Teacher-Parent Conference

By using collaborative approach (Glickman, 1990) derived from Dewey's democratic thinking (Dewey, 1966), both teacher and the parents share information and possible activities in arriving at a mutual plan. The teacher prepares five patterns of Chinese language learning environment (Lai, 1999) before the conference. In the clinical process, both the teacher and the parents are required an open-ended mind. The five patterns of Chinese language learning environment are (1) P+P+, (2) P+P, (3) P+P-, (4) P-P, and (5) P-P- (see Appendix I). P+ refers to the parent who has a positive attitude toward learning Chinese language, P- indicates the parent who has a negative attitude toward learning Chinese language. P is the parent whose attitude is opposite from the other side of the parents but performs weakly. Factors in each pattern include:

(1) Parents' thinking, value, and attitude toward learning Chinese culture (including Chinese language);
(2) Parents' action such as appreciating Chinese culture, sending children to Chinese school, sending children to Chinese organizations, using Chinese to communicate with children or the spouse, visiting Taiwan or China, applying Chinese media, etc.;
(3) Children motivation (preference to use Chinese media);
(4) Sibling's influence; and
(5) Children' performance in spoken Chinese.

Pattern I (P+P+)

In Pattern I (P+P+) both father and mother have a positive attitude toward teaching children Chinese. They appreciate Chinese culture; send their children to a Chinese school or a Chinese church; use Chinese to communicate with spouse and children; frequently visit Taiwan/China; and apply Chinese media such as Chinese movies, video tapes, story books, etc. Because of the parents' consistent efforts, children may build up their affective motivation to speak Chinese. They are likely to appreciate Chinese culture. Their siblings use Chinese to communicate. Since all factors in this pattern indicate a single positive direction toward learning Chinese, the power of Chinese language learning will be reinforced. It can penetrate learning barriers easily. Therefore, children in the P+P+ pattern tend to perform well in spoken Chinese.

Pattern II (P+P)

In Pattern II (P+P), one of the parents has a positive value or attitude toward teaching children Chinese. The other may believe that learning Chinese is not important at all. If the parent with a positive value or attitude dominates at home, he/she tends to send

children to a Chinese school or Chinese organizations. The family may occasionally apply Chinese media and visit Taiwan/China. Since one of the parents shows the opposite direction, all of the rest factors are more or less distracted by the other direction. Because the power of the positive value from one side of the parents is stronger than the negative value held by the other side, the rest of activities (factors) can be implemented but distracted. Thus, the power of Chinese language learning tends to be somewhat shaky. Children tend to have some problems to penetrate learning barriers. Therefore, in the P+P pattern, although children can communicate with others using spoken Chinese, their ability of spoken Chinese may be decreased when compared to the P+P+ pattern.

Pattern III (P+P-)

Pattern III (P+P-) is similar to Pattern Two (P+P), but neither of the parents' value dominates at home. In this pattern, parents' power of influence is likely to disappear because of equal strength in two directions. In other words, one side of the parents may simultaneously discourage many actions that are encouraged by the other side. The major empowering force may come from other sources out of home and present in an unstable way. Because the lack of a positive encouragement from parents, the power of Chinese language learning tends to be shaky. Children have difficulties to penetrate learning barriers. Therefore, in P+P- pattern, the possibility of using Chinese to communicate with others is very unlikely when compared to P+P+ and P+P patterns.

Pattern IV (P-P)

In Pattern IV (P-P), one of the parents has a positive value and attitude toward teaching children Chinese. However, the other believes that learning Chinese is not important at all. If one side of the parents with negative value dominates at home, the strength of the positive direction from the other side of the parents may be reduced. The rest of factors tend to be associated with a negative territory. For example, if the mother does not think that learning Chinese is important and she is also the one that provides the transportation and financial management. When the children confront learning frustration, she is likely to prevent children from learning Chinese in order to stay away from frustration. When the frustration can not be solved appropriately. Children' perceptions about Chinese are negative. They are not happy to learn it. Although the other side of the parents may try to encourage their children, The power of Chinese language learning may be created but not effective. It is more difficult to penetrate learning barriers when compared to the P+P+, P+P, and P+P- patterns. Thus, in the P-P Pattern, children are not likely to do well in spoken Chinese. They know a little bit Chinese, but they don't usually use it in everyday life.

Pattern V (P-P-)

In Pattern V (P-P-), neither father nor mother has a positive attitude toward teaching children Chinese. They both believe that learning Chinese is not useful for living in the United States. They often criticize Chinese culture and practice English with children and the spouse. They don't send children to a Chinese school or Chinese related

organizations. Not only they seldom visit Taiwan or China, they never play Chinese media. In fact, language is a part of culture. Since parents' perceptions about Chinese culture are not positive, the language is associated with its cultural origin as a negative territory. In such a case, children do not build up their affective domain to speak Chinese. They are not interested in Chinese culture. In addition, their siblings do not use Chinese to communicate. Although all the factors in this pattern point to a single direction, it is opposite to pattern One (P+P+). The power of Chinese language learning is not created. Children definitely can not penetrate their learning barriers. Therefore, most children in the P-P- Pattern don't have ability of spoken Chinese.

Present Five Patterns of Chinese Language Learning Circumstances

The five patterns can be presented by using pictures, videotapes, or other media. Teachers need to explain or provide a hard copy that elaborates the situation in the picture. It will be more attractive if teachers can find people to play roles for each pattern and record them with videotapes. Both individual and group processes are appropriate for watching this presentation. Encourage parents to ask questions in order to clarify the content of each pattern.

Discuss the Internal and External Consistency among Factors in the Pattern

Internal consistency indicate value conflicts within a person's mind. For example, parents like to watch Chinese movies or Chinese news, but they frequently criticize many aspects of the movie or news. External consistency refers to the performance conflicts among parents, siblings, and people involve in the organization. For example, one side of the parents encourages children to learn Chinese, but the other stops it. Teachers clarify each pattern by elaborating the internal and external consistency among factors and answering the inquiry from parents.

Identify a Matching Pattern by Parents

The more the parents reveal their thought and examples on the patterns, the clearer their pattern will be identified. Teachers need to play as a good listener to reflect the parents' thought. In this step, teachers and parents share their views on each factor related to the student.

Analyze Contextual Factors of Students Related to the Pattern

Once the pattern is identified, students' needs related to Chinese language learning pattern should be discussed. Teachers and parents should analyze the contextual factors of the students such as students' goals, habits, favorites, and activities.

Negotiate Possible Solutions and Select the Best One

Teachers and parents obtain ideas to propose possible solutions if there are problems. List all solutions and then analyze each one. Upon negotiation, they select the best solution for the future plan.

Plan and Implement Actions

Based on mutual agreement, teachers and parents establish a practical and open-ended plan in which students' needs and parents' actions can be considered in the instructional strategies for effective teaching. For example, if students' Chinese learning environment matches P+P+ pattern, it indicates that parents are very consistent and supportive. Then teachers need to re-examine his/her teaching strategies or classroom settings such as relationships among teacher and students.

Conduct Follow-up Observation and Evaluation

Once the actions are implemented, observation should be followed. One way to do this is to write a journal to record changes for everyday events. The other way may use tests to evaluate outcomes or conduct surveys to understand their changes of preference. The follow-up material should be prepared before the first step occurs.

Implications and suggestions

This clinical model (CMPA) incorporating five patterns of American Chinese Language Learning Environment (PCACLE) implies several salient features. First, Chinese teachers may find out the root problems that they have not noticed before. For example, when children with P+P+ parents have problems with learning Chinese, it may imply that teaching strategies or classroom settings do not meet students' needs. When children with the P+P-, P+P, and P-P patterns have problems, it may indicate that inconsistency between parents could be a serious barrier, which may cause ineffective teaching. In most cases, children with P-P- parents do not attend Chinese school. Second, Chinese teachers may use this model to do case studies. Since teaching Chinese in different areas might be influenced by different contextual factors, a case study indicating the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of this model is valuable. Third, CMPA and PCACLE can be applied in diverse ethnic groups when they want to help their next generations learn their native language in the place other than their own countries. For example, a French teacher may use CMPA and PCACLE to teach French-American French in the United States. Finally, the author suggests that CMPA may be useful for moral learning when parents' values engage in cultural diversity and consistency issues.

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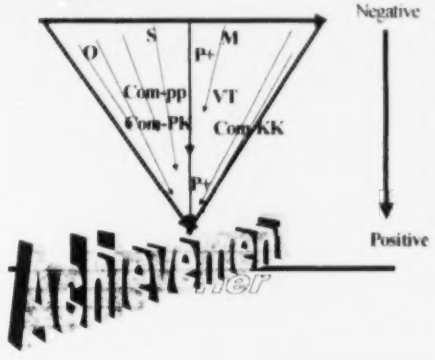
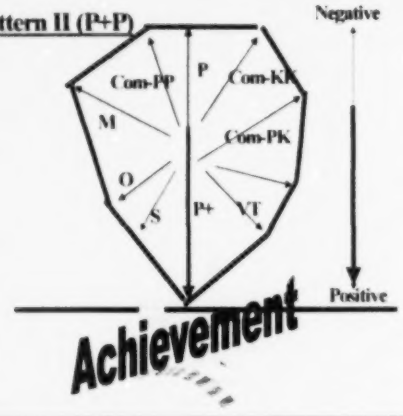
Appendix I: PCACLE

Patterns of Chinese Americans' Chinese Learning Environment

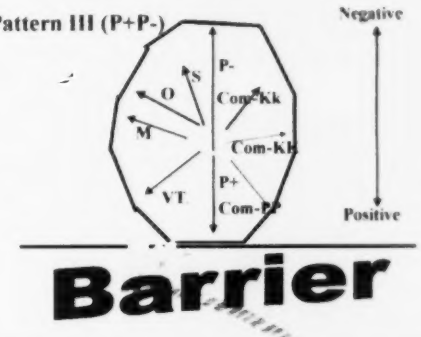
Pattern I (P+P+)



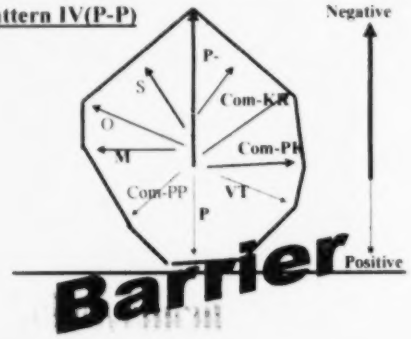
Pattern II (P+P)



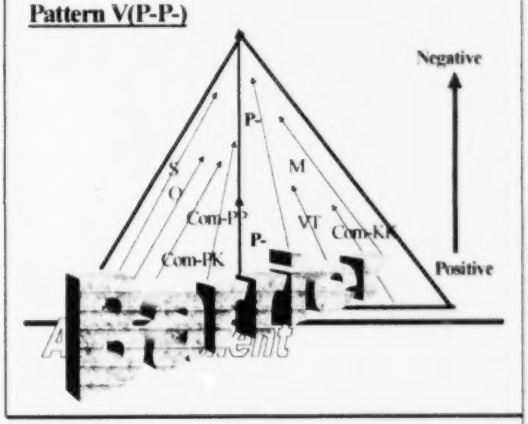
Pattern III (P+P-)



Pattern IV(P-P)



Pattern V(P-P-)



Positive: Positive attitudes toward teaching children Chinese
Negative: Negative attitudes toward teaching children Chinese
P+: Parent with positive attitudes (dominate)
P-: Parent with negative attitudes (dominate)
P: Parent with positive or negative attitude (weak)
S: Send kid to Chinese Schools
O: Send children to Chinese Organizations
M: Use media related to Chinese language learning
VT: Visit Taiwan or China
Com-KK: Communicate among children with Chinese
Com-PP: Communicate between parents
Com-PK Communicate between parents and children